NPS Form 10-900
(January 1992)

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United States Department of Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Brown Deer School

other names/site number Little White Schoolhouse Museum

2. Location

street & number 4800 West Green Brook Drive N/A not for publication

city or town Brown Deer N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Milwaukee code 079 zip code 53223

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

11/5/93

Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State Historic preservation Officer-WI

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property __ meets __ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(__ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying offical/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

Name of Property County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that that the property is:

- ✓ entered in the National Register.
  - __ See continuation sheet.
- __ determined eligible for the National Register.
  - __ See continuation sheet.
- __ determined not eligible for the National Register.
  - __ See continuation sheet.
- __ removed from the National Register.
- __ other, (explain:)

for Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action: Entered in the National Register 12/10/93

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)

- __ private
- X public-local
- __ public-state
- __ public-federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- X building(s)
- __ district
- __ site
- __ structure
- __ object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include listed resources within the count)

	Contributing	Noncontributing
buildings	1	0
sites		
structures		
objects		
Total	1	0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
EDUCATIONAL: school	RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)	
Greek Revival	foundation	STONE
	walls	WOOD: weatherboard
	roof	ASPHALT
	other	WOOD

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Brown Deer School is located on a flat plain in the midst of a public park. It is sited well back from the road and approached by a meandering gravel walk. The school stands alone in its grassy field except for a small, modern, frame utility building on the edge of a small pond just to the west of the school.

The school is a one-story, gable-roofed, rectangular, frame structure measuring about 25 by 50 feet constructed in 1884 and enlarged in 1900. The building has random rubble fieldstone foundations. The simple clapboard building has its entrance in the south-facing gable end. The central entrance with its small wooden stoop is flanked by a pair of six-over-six double hung wooden windows fitted with paneled wooden shutters. Both the door and the windows are enframed with plain board casings with peaked top boards accented with a small cap moulding. All of the windows on the building are fitted with modern storm windows. A small lunette window is set into the low-pitched gable. The remainder of the wooden detailing consists of a simple water table, narrow corner

X See Continuation Sheets

Description (continued)

boards, and a raking frieze board at the eaves that continues around the sides of the building under the open cornice.

The east and west elevations are similar to each other in appearance. Each is fenestrated with five, six-over-six, evenly spaced, shuttered, wooden, double hung windows identical to those on the front. The east elevation differs from the west only in that it has a wood paneled door at its north end opening onto a small, uncovered, wooden stoop.

The north gable end is windowless and devoid of architectural features. The low-pitched, asphalt shingled roof is pierced by a square cream brick chimney with a corbelled cap.

The interior is divided into two rooms. Inside the front door is a narrow vestibule/cloakroom that stretches across the entire front of the building. The space is simply finished with painted wooden floors, plaster walls and ceiling, and a painted vertical board wainscot. Cloak hooks mounted on boards line the walls at shoulder height. The doors and windows are enframed with painted, moulded casings. A pair of four-panel doors with ceramic knobs lead into the large school room that occupies the rest of the interior.

The school room is a plainly finished space with its original worn, painted wood floor, plaster walls and ceiling, and the same style vertical board wainscot and window and door casings found in the vestibule. The room is furnished as a nineteenth century school room with stationary, wooden, double school desks and benches with cast-iron supports arranged in three rows facing a one-step raised dais in the front. The dais contains the built-in, crescent-shaped, teacher's desk with its curved front made of vertical match-boarding. The desk is a reproduction of the original. Behind the dais, the north wall is covered with a continuous slate blackboard. At either end of the dais are plain

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Description (continued)

supply cupboards made of vertical boards that were originally used to store school books. They are original to the building. Elsewhere around the sides of the room are various period tables, cabinets, bookshelves, display cases, and such accessories as globes and hanging maps. At the rear of the room on the south wall between the two vestibule doors, a cantilevered plastered stove flue projects from the upper wall.

Alterations

The only alterations to the original fabric are the front fenestration, the chimney and foundations, the two doors leading from the vestibule to the classroom, and the door on the east elevation. The two front windows had to be replicated, since they were destroyed when the front was remodeled for use as a sheetmetal factory. The original front door was found intact sealed up inside the remodeled front wall, but it had to be replaced with the present, slightly wider, door since it was too narrow to meet modern building code requirements. The new door replicates the style of the original one. The two doors leading from the vestibule to the classroom were removed during the sheetmetal factory era. The present doors are antique ones salvaged from a nearby farmhouse that was being razed about 1972. They appear to be of the same period as the school and fit the original openings without requiring any alteration. The rear door on the east elevation was cut through during the 1920s or 1930s. The doorway was left in place when the building was restored to satisfy building code requirements for an emergency exit. A new four-panel wood door designed to match the style of the front door was installed in the opening.

The chimney was removed when the building was moved, and the present one dating from 1972 replicates the original. The stone

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Brown Deer School/School District No. 1, Town of Granville
Little White Schoolhouse Museum
Brown Deer, Milwaukee County, WI

Description (continued)

veneered concrete block foundations were built in 1972. The original foundations were solid fieldstone.

The alterations do not detract significantly from the architectural importance as a fine local example of a rural school.

Brown Deer School
Name of Property

Milwaukee County, WI
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

_X_ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

___ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

_X_ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

___ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

___ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

_X_ B removed from its original location.

___ C a birthplace or grave.

___ D a cemetery.

___ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

___ F a commemorative property.

___ G less than 50 years of age achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1884 - 1922[1]

Significant Dates

1884[2]
1900[3]

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Geirach, Friedrich, builder[4]
Knepel, Hugo, builder[5]

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SIGNIFICANCE

_X_ See Continuation Sheets

Brown Deer School/School District No. 1, Town of Granville
Little White Schoolhouse Museum
Brown Deer, Milwaukee County, WI

Significance (continued)

Significance

The Brown Deer School is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. It is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of education for its historical importance as a reminder of the role the one-room schoolhouse played in the community life of rural Wisconsin in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a fine example of a vernacular Greek Revival style, nineteenth century, rural, one-room schoolhouse.

The Wisconsin Cultural Resource Plan has identified one- to six-room rural schoolhouses that retain a high degree of integrity as being worthy of study and possible nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The Brown Deer School is the last surviving nineteenth century institutional building in Brown Deer and one of the last tangible links with the village's nineteenth century past. It is also the only surviving intact one-room schoolhouse of its period in populous Milwaukee County. The building is notable for its high degree of physical integrity.

Criteria Considerations

Ordinarily moved structures are not eligible for listing in the National Register. The Brown Deer School was moved from its original site in July of 1972 in order to save it from demolition.[6] It was moved approximately one mile within the same community in which it was built from a retail business environment on a busy commercial street to a parcel that more closely approximates its original setting. Old photographs show the building to have stood on the edge of the Village of Brown Deer adjacent to an open field on an unpaved country road. Its present site, which is a grassy

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Brown Deer School/School District No. 1, Town of Granville
Little White Schoolhouse Museum
Brown Deer, Milwaukee County, WI

Significance (continued)

community park that is similar in character to its nineteenth century rural setting, is the only land remaining in the now heavily built-up suburban bedroom community of Brown Deer that could provide a suitable location of the building.

Architectural Significance

Architecturally, the Brown Deer School is, in most ways, a typical example of a frame, rural, one-room schoolhouse. It is notable primarily for its exceptionally conservative design. Although school district records document conclusively that the subject structure was built in 1884 and enlarged in 1900, the building stylistically is a product of the 1850s and 1860s. Its chaste wooden detailing, low roof pitch, and overall proportions suggest the late Greek Revival/Early Italianate transitional style of the mid-nineteenth century. The six-over-six double hung windows, gable lunette, paneled wood shutters, and peaked window and door surrounds are further hallmarks of 1850 to 1870 period design. It is extraordinary, especially for a community in such close proximity to a major city, to find so retarditaire a structure being erected as late as 1884 when the influence on schoolhouse design of the waning Victorian Gothic and waxing Queen Anne styles was already widespread. The incredibly conservative nature of the predominantly German farming community of Brown Deer is further evidenced by the 1900 addition made to the north end of the building. The building contract specified in great detail that the new part of the building should match the old exactly, right down to duplicating the long-out-of-fashion six-over-six window sash and the archaic paneled wood shutters for the four new windows. The use of solid paneled exterior wood shutters on a building like this was unusual enough in 1884, but practically unheard of by 1900.

Significance (continued)

In summary, the Brown Deer school is the only intact nineteenth century one-room schoolhouse in Milwaukee County. It accurately portrays the appearance of a rural schoolhouse and reflects the architectural tastes of the area's conservative German farmers.

Historical Significance: Education

The Brown Deer School is historically significant under Criterion A as an important tangible link to the social and institutional structure of rural Milwaukee County in the nineteenth century. The school has survived intact as a visual reminder of a now vanished, but once key, component of rural community life. As these now obsolete structures are increasingly being razed or altered beyond recognition of their original appearance to accommodate other uses, it is important that intact structures such as this are preserved. This is especially crucial in urban areas like Milwaukee County to maintain a visual record of the area's now nearly vanished agrarian past.

Historical Background

Municipal education during Milwaukee County's territorial period tended to be a sporadic affair in which schools were established wherever a room and a teacher could be found. The 1827 Michigan School Law, under which Wisconsin initially functioned, determined how many families were required to establish a common school in the territories and how taxes would be levied to support it. By 1839, the amended law provided that as soon as ten families lived in a town, a school district had to be organized and a competent teacher hired. The law also provided for the selection of school commissioners, directors and inspectors. These positions were sometimes elected and sometimes appointed. To support the

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Significance (continued)

rural schools, the Federal government set aside the sixteenth section in each township for the use of the school district.

The history of education in Granville Township, where the Brown Deer School was built, is typical of many rural towns in Wisconsin. Granville Township was first settled in 1835 by a couple of adventurous farmers from upstate New York. Settlement began in earnest in 1838 when the first government land sale was held. Land sales in Granville were inhibited, however, by a legal dispute that arose concerning a large part of the land in the township that had allegedly been set aside to finance the Rock River Canal project. This dispute prevented purchasers from obtaining a clear title to their land until the issue was finally settled in 1849. Nevertheless by late 1839, it is estimated that 225 people had settled in Granville. In that year, the settlers named their newly organized town after Granville, New York where a number of the prominent early farmers had emigrated from. The town grew rapidly, and by 1850, 1713 people lived in Granville Township. The population topped out at 2,663 in 1860 after which it declined to a little less than 2,300 persons and remained stable at that level into the early 1900s.[7]

Education was a priority with the mostly Yankee early settlers. Practically as soon as the farm families had a roof over their heads, they set about organizing schools to educate their youth. It is believed that these early schools were often located in log structures or were taught in private homes. Tradition maintains that one of the first school buildings was built in Section 12 at the hamlet of Brown Deer near what is now the intersection of Deerwood Road and West River Lane. The 1858 H. F. Walling map does not specifically note a school at this location, although a building is shown where the present Brown Deer School was later built. By that time, there were six other schools in Granville. The 1876 Belden <u>Illustrated Historical Atlas of Milwaukee County</u> notes a school on this site in addition to the

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Significance (continued)

eight other schools in Granville. Although the population of the town remained steady at between 2,200 and 2,300 residents until well into the twentieth century, the number of schools gradually increased until there were 13 by 1914.[8] The necessity of having schools within easy walking distance of the widely scattered farms and the desire to relieve the overcrowding that characterized some of the pioneer schools, may account for the increase in the number of schools in a town with an essentially static population. All of the schools, including the Brown Deer School, were one-room affairs where a single teacher instructed children of various ages in grades 1 through 8.

The present Brown Deer School was built in 1884 by School District No. 1 of the Town of Granville to replace an earlier school on the site. It was constructed at what is now 4136 West River Lane to serve the farm families of the rural hamlet of Brown Deer. It was built at a cost of $800.00 by local resident Friedrich Gierach on the site of the earlier school, which was subsequently sold and moved off the lot.[9]

By 1900, the school was too small to accommodate the growing school age population, and a sixteen-foot addition was added to the north end of the building, nearly doubling the classroom size. The addition was built by Hugo F. Knepel at a cost of $256.00.[10] The school was adequate to serve the mostly agricultural population of School District No. 1 until 1922 when a new, larger, more modern, two-room brick school, the Deerwood School, was built nearby to replace it. The original school furnishings were disbursed at that time. After it ceased use as a school, the building was occupied by the St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran congregation, who used it as a church. Later it became a sheetmetal factory, the Al Witt Sheetmetal Company, and finally was used for storage. During its period of use as a sheetmetal factory, the front of the building was altered. On the interior, the vestibule became an office, and

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Significance (continued)

the dais was removed. A fire damaged a portion of the south end of the classroom at this time.

In 1972, the owner of the building, Mr. Joseph Gill, let it be known that he wanted to raze the old school to make way for a parking lot. Because of the sentimental associations the community had with the building, which by then was the only nineteenth century public structure left in the village, the village government and the Brown Deer Historical Society jointly took on the project of moving the building to a new site. The Village agreed to provide the site in the Village Park where it is now located, while the Brown Deer Historical Society assumed the responsibility of moving and restoring the building. On July 29, 1972, the school was moved one mile west to its present site, and a restoration campaign was begun. By 1973, the exterior was restored to its 1900 appearance, except that the door on the east elevation added during the sheetmetal factory period was retained to provide the building code required second exit. By May of 1976, the interior had been restored to its c. 1900 appearance, based on physical evidence and eyewitness accounts. By that time, the interior had been completely furnished with period fixtures.

The school became known as Brown Deer's 1884 Little White Schoolhouse, and a portion of the classroom was developed into a local history museum. Since May 1976, almost 11,000 fourth graders from Brown Deer and the metropolitan Milwaukee area have learned about the history of Brown Deer and educational practices in the nineteenth century by attending the "living schoolhouse" program, conducted in the spring and fall at the school.[11] The program is sponsored by the Brown Deer Historical Society. The Schoolhouse became a Milwaukee County Landmark in 1979.

Brown Deer School/School District No. 1, Town of Granville
Little White Schoolhouse Museum
Brown Deer, Milwaukee County, WI

Significance (continued)

Footnotes

[1]These dates are the period from 1884 when it was constructed until 1922 when it ceased use as a school.

[2]Proceedings and Account Books of School District No. 1, Town of Granville, 1884-1885.

[3]Construction Contract with Hugo Knepel dated 7/27/1900.

[4]Account Books of School District No. 1, Town of Granville, 1884-1885.

[5]Construction Contract between School District No. 1, Town of Granville, and Hugo Knepel dated 7/27/1900.

[6]Option to purchase "Little White School House" from Joseph Gill dated 6/5/1972.

[7]Belden, H. & Co. Illustrated Historical Atlas of Milwaukee County, WI. Chicago, 1876, p. 12.

[8]Caspar, H. Nicolaus & Co., Map of Milwaukee County, WI, 1914.

[9]Proceedings and Account Books of School District No. 1, Town of Granville, 1884-1885.

[10]Construction Contract between School District No. 1, Town of Granville, and Hugo F. Knepel dated 7/27/1900.

[11]Brown Deer Historical Society Newsletter, October, 1992.

Brown Deer School
Name of Property

Milwaukee County, WI
County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

_X_ See Continuation Sheets

Previous Documentation on File (NPS):
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:
___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
___ Federal Agency
___ Local government
___ University
_X_ Other
Name of repository:
Brown Deer Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	1/6	4/2/1/0/4/0	4/7/8/1/3/0/0	3	/	/ / / / /	/ / / / / / /
2	/	/ / / / /	/ / / / / / /	4	/	/ / / / /	/ / / / / / /

___ See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

_X_ See Continuation Sheet

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

_X_ See Continuation Sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name Leslie J. Vollmert
title Historic Preservation Consultant
organization Brown Deer Historical Society date Jan. 20, 1993
street & number 2840 N. Stowell Ave. telephone 414/286-5705
city or town Milwaukee state WI zip code 53211

Brown Deer School/School District No. 1, Town of Granville
Little White Schoolhouse Museum
Brown Deer, Milwaukee County, WI

References (continued)

REFERENCES

Books

Kittleson, Dorothy, ed., Brown Deer's 1972 Heritage Almanac, Brown Deer, WI (1972)

Milwaukee's Writers Project, History of Milwaukee County, Milwaukee, WI (1947).

Watrous, Jerome, ed., Memoirs of Milwaukee County, Madison, WI (1909).

Wyatt, Barbara, ed., Cultural Resources Management Plan, Division of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

Newspapers

Brown Deer Herald, 6/22/1972; 7/13/1972; 8/31/1972; 12/7/1972.

Milwaukee Sentinel, 6/6/1972.

Pamphlets and Newsletters

Brown Deer Historical Society Newsletter, 6/1984; 7/1989; 10/1989; 10/1990; 4/1991; 6/1991; 10/1991; 6/1992; 10/1992.

"Brown Deer's Little White Schoolhouse, 1884-1922" (Brochure), Brown Deer, WI (1992).

Brown Deer School/School District No. 1, Town of Granville
Little White Schoolhouse Museum
Brown Deer, Milwaukee County, WI

References (continued)

Government Records

Proceedings of School District No. 1, Town of Granville. 7/7/1884.

Account Books of School District No. 1, Town of Granville, 1884-1885.

Construction Contract between Hugo F. Knepel and School District No. 1, Town of Granville, for an addition to the schoolhouse dated 7/27/1900.

Option to Purchase "Little White School House" from Joseph Gill executed by Village of Brown Deer dated 6/5/1972.

Records of the Village of Brown Deer, Planning Commission and Village Board 6/23/1972; 6/26/1972.

Maps and Atlases

Belden, H. & Co., Illustrated Historical Atlas of Milwaukee County, WI, Chicago (1876).

Caspar, Carl Nicolaus & Co., Map of Milwaukee County, WI, (1886; 1891; 1914).

Walling, H. F., Map of the County of Milwaukee, WI, New York (1858).

Brown Deer School/School District No. 1, Town of Granville
Little White Schoolhouse Museum
Brown Deer, Milwaukee County, WI

Geographical Data (continued)

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

SECTION 2, T8N, R21E, BROWN DEER STATION SUBDIVISION IN THE VILLAGE OF BROWN DEER. THAT PART OF LOT 1 COMMENCING AT THE SE CORNER OF SAID LOT, THEN NORTH AND EAST ALONG THE EAST LOT LINE 320 FT., THEN WEST 137 FT., THEN SOUTH TO THE BEGINNING POINT.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes only the parcel of land on which the school now stands and a minimum of at least 25 feet on each side of the building to provide a suitable setting for a rural school.

Brown Deer School
Name of Property

Milwaukee County, WI
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location. A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Thiensville Quadrant 7.5 minute series.

Photographs Representitive black and white photographs of the property.

13 black and white glossy (5 x 7) photographs labeled:

1. Name of property
2. Location
3. Photographer
4. Date photographed
5. Repository for survey negatives
6. View
7. Photo number

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Mr. Paul Patri, Village Manager, Village of Brown Deer
street & number 4800 W. Green Brook Dr. telephone
city or town Brown Deer state WI zip code 53223

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.